

# FACT SHEET

## YOUTH SUICIDE



**Maine Youth Suicide Prevention**  
Education, Resources and Support—It's Up to All of Us.

**Governor Angus S. King Jr.  
and the Maine Children's  
Cabinet**

The **Statewide Crisis Hotline** of the Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services is available 24 hours a day statewide  
**1-888-568-1112**

The **Statewide Information and Resource Center** of the Office of Substance Abuse offers educational resources **1-800-499-0027**

The **Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program** is a collaborative effort of Governor Angus S. King, Jr. and the Maine Children's Cabinet including the Departments of: Human Services, Education, Corrections, Behavioral and Developmental Services, and Public Safety.

To learn more about Maine's Youth Suicide Prevention Program, call the Injury Prevention Program at 287-5356 or 1-800-698-3624.

The impact of a youth suicide on friends, family, and an entire community is devastating and long lasting. Suicide is often the result of a complex set of behaviors and circumstances. Using a combination of strategies, many youth suicides can be prevented.

### Is Youth Suicide a problem in Maine?

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Maine 15 – 24 year olds.
- Among Maine youth ages 15-24, the suicide rate is currently about the same as the national average rate. The Maine rate was higher than the national average rate for 15 of the 18 years from 1981 – 1998.
- From 1994 – 1998, there were 97 suicides among 10 – 24 year olds.
- In 1999 there were 17 suicides of youth under the age of 24. These deaths included 1 seven year old, 10 fifteen to nineteen year olds, and 6 twenty to twenty four year olds.

### Who is at Risk?

- 4 of every 5 completed youth suicides in Maine are males.
- There is no *typical* profile of a suicidal youth; suicide is the result of a complex set of circumstances.
- Young people most at risk of suicide struggle with emotional or behavioral difficulties such as depression, conduct disorders, substance abuse, and ultra-perfectionistic or rigid behavior patterns.
- Other groups considered being at high risk include those who are isolated or ostracized, gays and lesbians, potential high school dropouts, runaways, or victims of abuse.
- 6 of 10 youth suicides are committed with a firearm; thus young people with access to a firearm may be at increased risk.

### What About Suicide Attempts?

- There are an estimated 20 suicide attempts for every youth suicide.
- In 1999 there were 294 hospital admissions as a result of suicide attempts for Maine youth aged 10 to 24, a rate of 88/ 100,000 people.
- Hospitalization rates for self-inflicted injuries are highest among young women aged 15 – 19.